

# COSMOPOLITAN CHRONICLE

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and  
restoration of the Casa de Bandini and Cosmopolitan Hotel.  
Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

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## Weather.

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In the rainstorm yesterday, the Cosmopolitan Hotel and all of Old Town were deluged with wind and rain. All through a late lunch, I watched the rain come down in sheets, and the streets of Old Town coat with water. Nini Minovi (ASM Affiliates) and Patrick English (Soltek Pacific) were there battenning down the hatches. I checked with Nini about 3:30 p.m., and she was concerned about the back courtyard. About 4:30 p.m., DPR inspector Robert Robinson decided to check it once more for the night. I went with him just about dark to see if the historic fabric -- the original adobe and wood architecture, and the archaeological sections -- was protected enough.

As I stood on the second floor in the gusting rain, I looked out over the darkened plaza with the wind pushing the giant bay laurel tree around. In the darkening evening, I

couldn't see the electric lines, or the freeway in the distance, and I couldn't hear the trains. For just a minute, it appeared much the way it looked on a winter evening in 1874. For myself, I have spent many a winter here in Old Town, having begun working here in the 1970's. I even remember one afternoon when the Ranger came to me at the Casa de Estudillo and said that Old Town was being evacuated because of flooding from Highway 8. It must have been like that back when the hotel was occupied, always watching the weather, always watching the river, and knowing that the 1875 remodel of Derby's Dike might not hold things in.

As I was standing on the exterior porch facing the strong wind last night, I was also thinking of an A. S. Ensworth letter to Thomas Whaley from Jan. 26th, 1862:

"It was not only a flood of waters falling from the heavens, but such a South-easter I have never known, the tide backing up the waters of the bay which was running in from the river to a height

never before witnessed by Americans. Luckily the settlements are all situated that the high water could do damage to but a few... Most of the walls of the corrals at the rear of the Bandini and Estudillo houses fell in... Some of the high corral wall in the rear of the Franklin fell. Crissman's shop walls fell in and the whole of the wall around Bandini's large garden, below the pear garden, is one mass of mud, the water being about two feet deep around it."

As we think and puzzle today over global warming, these early historic records become important. Sudden storms of great velocity were not predictable by internet weather bureaus. They must have had their own weather warning systems, like arthritic joints, or flocks of sea gulls circling inland far from the water. It is a real credit to this old building, with which I have fallen in love, to think of all the storms, both natural and political, that it has weathered.

